

# Paul Simon's dream

March 23, 2007

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Back in November 2003, former Sen. Paul Simon stopped by the Tribune to talk up an idea: Send a half million U.S. students to study overseas each year. Don't let them all congregate in London and Paris and take courses in English--encourage them to study in developing nations instead.

Simon died 19 days later. That prompted an editorial in which we praised his "last campaign" and suggested a single change in the proposal: It should bear his name.

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), the chairman and ranking minority member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, have introduced legislation to create the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007.

What a great idea.

They're calling for the creation of a government-sponsored foundation to administer a study-abroad program that would put more emphasis on the experience and less on the classroom.

The goal would be to send 1 million U.S. students each year to parts of the world that will play an increasingly pivotal role in American business and foreign policy. Topping the list: China, the Middle East, and other developing nations.

America will need a young workforce that has a broad knowledge of the world beyond the traditional capitals of Europe. Congress has a chance to promote that, and to honor one of Illinois' finest citizens.

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